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and realizes that a veritable horror, simply because it was covered over and hidden, had come to seem inevitable and normal. Such writing as these men have done, says Jane Addams, "is the roll of the drum which announces the approach of the troops."

Miss Addams reviews in this book the recent legal enactments that concern the social evil; the amelioration of economic conditions (a subject with which Mr. Allen's book, *Woman's Part in Government*, is exclusively concerned); Moral Education and Legal Protection of Children; Philanthropic Rescue and Prevention; and Increased Social Control. Her theories are substantiated by a large number of cases with which Miss Addams has come in personal contact, none more pathetic than that in which she tells how she visited a home for semi-delinquent girls against each of whom stood a grave charge involving the loss of chastity. Upon each of the little white beds or on the stiff chairs standing by was a doll belonging to the young delinquent. "I had come to the house prepared to lecture to its inmates," writes Miss Addams; "I remained to dress dolls with a handful of little girls who eagerly asked questions about the dolls I had once possessed."

Miss Addams's book is a book for every woman in the country to read and own and keep on hand to refer to. It is the outcome of a great brain and a greater heart and a life of more than self-abnegation—a life of self-dedication. If, as Miss Addams hopes, America bears a valiant part in the international crusade of the compassionate, enlisting under its banner not only those sensitive to the wrongs of others, but those conscious of the destruction of the race itself, who form the standing army of humanity's self-pity, it will owe the largest single debt of gratitude to Miss Addams herself, who has taught in life and in words what her great master Tolstoy lived to teach, namely, that "though we constantly think that there are circumstances in which a human being can be treated without affection, there are no such circumstances."

LAUGHTER: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic. By HENRI BERGSON. Authorized translation by Cloudesley Brereton and Fred. Rothwell. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1911.

The English authoritative work upon the psychology of the comic is still George Meredith's famous essay *On the Comic*. Bergson's book is made up of three essays originally published in the *Revue de Paris*, and his treatment is quite simple and untechnical. The first essay treats of the general nature of the Comic; the second, of the Comic element in words and situations; and the third, of the Comic character.

The general and penetrative theory which Bergson tries to introduce is that the comic begins at the point where spirit ceases to enliven matter; at that point, namely, where matter acts mechanically and separately from the informing spirit. Involuntary action is one of the most usual excitants of laughter; wherever through absent-mindedness or lack of elasticity or physical obstinacy, as a result, in fact, of rigidity or momentum. The muscles continue to perform a movement when the circumstances call for readjustment. Again, along the same lines, a character is likely to be comic in proportion to its lack of self-knowledge. The comic person is comic just at the point where intelli-

gence stops short and the character is unconscious of its own real traits. Harpagon was a miser, but unconscious of his miserliness. This is again a form of automatism not unlike the simple physical awkwardness which excites laughter.

Life and society requiring of each of us a constantly alert attention to the outlines of the immediate situation, together with an elasticity of mind and body to enable us to adapt ourselves to it, we become comic when we lack them slightly, and tragic when we lack them entirely.

Bergson points out first that laughter is and must always point to *absence of feeling*, since emotion is the arch-enemy of laughter. The comic, he says, cannot produce its effect unless it fall upon a soul thoroughly calm and unruffled. It is at this point that one might well introduce the question as to why it is that while Socrates could go to a comedy and laugh heartily at a caricature of himself, no stretch of imagination will allow one to think of Christ as laughing at any caricature of a human being. He had the nobility and divinity of human nature too deeply at heart.

Secondly, Bergson makes it a point that all laughter is always laughter of a group and implies some subtle freemasonry or complicity. A man, asked why he did not weep when a whole congregation were shedding tears, replied, "I don't belong to the parish." His theory of tears is even more applicable to laughter. We have to be in the secret to see the fun.

With Meredith he agrees that the truly comic can only begin when society and the individual, freed from the worry of self-preservation, begin to regard themselves as works of art. To produce a comic poet, then, a high degree of civilization is required and a certain equality between the sexes. A simple bourgeois circle rarely furnishes wit. It is likely to be as inwardly dull as outwardly correct, as Meredith points out.

In the second essay Bergson says that a comic meaning is invariably obtained when an absurd idea is fitted into a well-established phrase form. This is a mode of wit used very largely by some of our best-known humorous writers; take, for example, E. S. Martin's essay on Women, in which he gravely discusses "those influences which tend to make a man of her"; or again the effect the same writer gets when he says of the sea: "The sea, to be sure, can stand all climates, is left out in all weathers, endures all atmospheric fluctuations, all kinds of sunlight, short rays, and blistering heat, and still survives. Survives! Yes, but with what vicissitudes of temper and behavior!"

If the misapplication of the conventional phrase is the form of wit we find most used by Lowell, Warner, and E. S. Martin, the whole of English wit consists in understating, another form which Bergson mentions as being as effective as exaggeration, which is the stock-in-trade of Mark Twain. All these various forms Bergson fits into his theory that the very essence of the comic is an exaggeration of a certain natural rigidity in things. Light comedy, he says, holds the same relation to actual life that a jointed doll does to a man. The comic character must be, says Bergson, deep rooted so as to furnish inexhaustible matter to comedy; superficial, in order that it may remain within the scope of comedy; invisible to its owner, as the comic always partakes of the nature of the unconscious; careful of itself, so it may be displayed without scruple;

troublesome to others, so that it may be repressed without pity; inseparable from social life and yet insufferable to society. These essays furnish the most thoroughgoing analysis of the sources and effects of laughter we have yet had.

THE RELIGION OF SCIENCE. By JAMES W. LEE. New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1912.

None who follow the fluctuations of religious thought can have failed to note the reaction in the last quarter of a century from materialistic philosophy. Not only has there been a renaissance of wonder, a great revival of confidence in the mystic realities of experience, but a continuous growth toward a newer interpretation of age-old dogma which should bring it in line with the facts of the spiritual life. Of this latter attitude, James W. Lee is an eloquent exponent.

The author points out that religion is the only subject concerning which every person exercises the privileges of private interpretation. If a bank clerk were suspected of entertaining opinions about the multiplication table not held by the directors, says the author, he would be asked to resign his position. In all matters of verifiable and tangible fact this is naturally so, and the author would seem somewhat to overlook the difficulties of making a science of the subtle and secret relations of the soul to its Creator. Religion, he concedes, is the only important reality left unsystematized by the scientific method. He is disturbed that though we receive our theories of the stars from astronomers, and of the elements from chemists, we accept or reject the conclusions of theologians according as they tally with our private experience. The author believes, however, that it is possible to build a theological system large and comprehensive enough to contain universally valid knowledge of the realities of religion, and that the time to do so is at hand. Theology, he believes, if constructed in accordance with the principles of the scientific method, will become a science for religion, in the same way that astronomy is a science for the stars. Perhaps a spiritual truth can never be quite so static as a physical one. The wind of the spirit bloweth where it listeth, and spiritual facts, being of the very essence of life, are a continuous growth. The realities of religion, it is true, can never be settled by vote, as Bertrand Russell says the pragmatists settle philosophical truths, but must always be judged by their fecundity. By their fruits ye shall know them, and nothing will ever convince men of spiritual truth but the fruits of the spirit. A transformed life is a reality, and whenever any religion can show that it has power to transform human nature into divine nature, self-preservation into love and self-sacrifice, it will prevail.

The author explains that what he means by a science of religion is such an intellectual construction as will enable us to store our conceptions of spiritual realities in a house equal in style to the other buildings in the city of universally valid knowledge. What he means by the religion of science is Christianity, because he finds it to be a perfect expression and complete realization of the idea which students of religion tell us is at the bottom of all religions.

The most valuable contribution in the volume is the author's final plea in the last chapter for a race with unified interests.